

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

AUGUST 1, 1848.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BREESE made the following

REPORT:

*The select committee, to whom was referred the resolution of the Senate to inquire into the expediency of providing for the publication of the result of the late exploring expedition of J. C. Frémont to California and Oregon, to be published as a national work, free from copy-right and subject to the disposition of Congress; and also to inquire into the expediency of providing for the continuation and completion of the surveys and exploration of the said J. C. Frémont, with a view to develop the geographical character of the country, and the practicability of establishing railroads or other communications between the valley of the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean, the result of said further surveys and explorations to be also published as a national work, free from copy-right and subject to the disposition of Congress, respectfully ask leave to report:*

That it is a matter of great public interest, the committee believe, for the government and for the people of the United States, to become accurately acquainted with the value of the large possessions now belonging to the United States beyond the Rocky mountains, and also with the means of communicating with those possessions and with the Pacific ocean, on which they border, by railroads or other modes of travel and conveyance; and the committee believe, from the knowledge they have of the inclination of Mr. Frémont's mind, his habits and pursuits, and his already great acquaintance with the countries in question, acquired through extraordinary perseverance, to be peculiarly well fitted to give to the government and to the people the information it is so desirable for them to possess in relation to the value of California and Oregon, and the means of communicating with them.

From the early age of seventeen, as the committee are informed, Mr. Frémont has been almost constantly engaged in astronomical and geographical pursuits, and nearly the whole time in the open field, and the last six years in the country beyond the Mississippi and the Rocky mountains. He has made three expeditions, to those

remote and interesting regions. The results of the two first were published by order of Congress, and commanded general applause both in this country and in Europe. The celebrated Baron Humboldt, and the president of the Royal Geological and Royal Geographical Societies, London, have spoken of them in most favorable terms, and eminent scientific men and journals of our own country have yielded equal commendation. [*See appendix to this report.*] An assistant of the celebrated Nicollet, who was a distinguished member of the French National Institute, he has reached a most commanding position as a scientific explorer, and achieved for himself the designation of the American Humboldt.

The first question with the committee was to inquire into the expediency of publishing, as a national work, free of copy-right, and subject to the disposition of Congress, the results of this last, or third expedition of Mr. Frémont; and, although favorably impressed with the value of these results, from the previous labors and character of the author, it was deemed proper to inquire into the real character of the proposed publication; means for forming some judgment on this point being already at hand in the manuscript map of Oregon and California, (now in the hands of the lithographer, and which several of the committee have examined,) and also in the geographical memoir to illustrate that map, published by order of the Senate, and which, it is presumed, all have read. This map and memoir, in the judgment of the committee, not only sustain the previous reputation of the author, but enhance it; as might well be expected from a more ripened intellect, from a more experienced explorer, and from a spirit ardent in the pursuit of science, and excited by applause to higher exertions. This map and memoir, though hastily prepared, and as a mere preliminary to a full work, increase the reputation of their author, and give valuable information to the statesman and to the farmer, to the astronomer and geographer, to the man of science in the walks of botany and meteorology. But they must be regarded only as a sample of the results of that expedition, from the view of which the value of the whole may be judged. As far as the exploration has been carried, everything necessary to show climate, soil, and productions, has been collected. More than one thousand specimens in botany, a great number in geology and mineralogy, with drawings of birds and animals, and remarkable scenery, and a large collection of the skins of birds, with the plumage preserved, have been, as the committee are informed, brought home, to enrich the stores and add to the sum of human knowledge. The botanical specimens, examined by Dr. Torrey, are deemed by him of great value, and worthy of the expense of European engraving, if not done by our own government.

The committee, upon this view of the results of the last expedition of Mr. Frémont, deem them of great national importance, giving just ideas of Oregon and California, and such as ought to be published in the manner suggested in the resolution under consideration.

The continuation of the surveys and explorations by Mr. Fré-

mont, with a view to complete our knowledge of the great country between the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean, is the remaining inquiry referred to this committee, and of the expediency of providing for such continuation, they entertain no doubt. It is, in their judgment, but carrying out the plain suggestion of reason, and the plan of Mr. Jefferson, when he sent Lewis and Clark to the Pacific ocean.

Reason tells a nation, as it does an individual, that when it has acquired a new and distant possession, the first thing to be done is, to learn its value, and the means of getting to it. The instructions of Mr. Jefferson to Lewis and Clark, drawn up by his own hand, embraced inquiries under both these heads, in relation to Oregon; they now become still more important in relation to Oregon and California united and the intervening region of the Rocky mountains, which lies as a barrier to be crossed, or turned, between those territories and the valley of the Mississippi.

The committee think they do not err when they assume it as an indisputable position, that the public interest and the wishes of the people require further examinations into the character of the soil, climate, and productions; the geology, botany, and mineralogy of Oregon and California; and also, into the practicability of railroad and other communications between those countries and the valley of the Mississippi, to which the public attention has been lately, and is now, so much excited; and they do not hesitate to say, that Mr. Frémont is one of the most, if not the most, suitable person to make these examinations, and a publication of the results, under the direction of Congress, and without copy-right, as the most judicious and advantageous mode of publication. Mr. Frémont has spent six years of his life in explorations to these distant regions, and in that time has crossed the Rocky mountains, as the committee are informed, at seven different points; has traversed the country from the Mississippi on several different lines, and has made about twenty thousand miles of explorations in wilderness countries, and understands thoroughly, there is no doubt, the general structure and configuration of the country, and knows where to go and what to do to complete his examinations. He has shown himself to be possessed of all the qualifications for such an enterprize, with resources to supply wants, to conquer difficulties, and to command success; and talent to execute his task to the satisfaction and admiration of his own countrymen, and of the first men of Europe.

The committee learn with pleasure that it is Mr. Frémont's own desire to finish up the great work in which he was so unexpectedly interrupted in the course of the last year. No other person probably could, for the reasons stated, do the work so well, or in so short a time, or at so small an expense. No other person could be employed in the work without appropriating to himself the fruits of his long and arduous labors, and building upon foundations which he has laid, and taking the credit of operations which only want the finishing hand of their author to erect a monument of honor to himself and of utility to his country. It therefore seems

but an act of justice to this individual that he should be continued in a work which he commenced, and has thus far so successfully prosecuted.

In his geographical memoir, printed by order of the Senate, Mr. Frémont proposes to continue and complete his explorations in Oregon and California, and to publish the results, under the direction of Congress, as a national work, and without copy-right. It is the mode in which the results of his previous expeditions have been published, and with great advantage to the public, as all will acknowledge, his journals and maps being immediately reprinted and multiplied in cheap editions, as well in Europe as in this country; and thus all his discoveries, and all the information he acquired, passing at once into the mass of general knowledge. It is deemed, by the committee, the proper mode of disseminating useful information obtained at the expense of the government, and which should be diffused at once without the impediment of copy-rights, and the author, where deserving it, compensated in some other form for any extraordinary service which he has rendered.

The policy and expediency of ascertaining the value of our new and distant acquisitions was early felt and enforced by our government. It commenced with the acquisition of Louisiana. The expedition of Lewis and Clark was the offspring of that policy. The cotemporaneous expeditions of Major Freeman, on the Red river, and of Lieutenant Pike to the source of the Mississippi, were parts of the same policy. Mr. Jefferson, at the same time, recommended annual appropriations for the purpose of continuing geographical researches in Louisiana. In the years 1804 and 1806, during his Presidency, and under the recommendation of that illustrious friend and patron of science, reports were made by committees of the House of Representatives in favor of the annual appropriations for explorations, but they did not ripen into laws. At a later date, and but recently, provision has been made for promoting geological discoveries on the upper Mississippi and Lake Superior, with a view to understand the value of the public lands there situate; and the sum of forty thousand dollars is inserted in the general appropriation bill of the present session to defray the expenses of the present year of that survey.

The committee do but advert to the large expenditure for explorations upon the water to distant islands of the ocean, gathering in its progress rich spoils to add to the treasury of science, and opening to the knowledge of our country all that is remarkable in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms of countries whose resources our enterprise has mainly contributed to unfold to the world.

These distant but interesting countries are not our own, and are not to be settled and cultivated by our race, and if it was good policy to traverse the deep to visit them, and to publish the results of the hazardous exploit as a national work, the committee cannot hesitate to believe that the policy of the explorations proposed to be followed by their publication as a national work, the development of the resources of a country soon to be filled by peo-

ple of our own lineage, is much more apparent, and commends itself more strongly to the general approbation.

The committee, therefore, feeling all the reasons in favor of such explorations to be greatly increased by the recent acquisition of California, and the exclusive possession of Oregon, and when so much has already been done towards exploring them, deem it expedient that further provision be made for exploring Oregon and California, and ascertaining practicable routes for a railroad or other communications between the valley of the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean, and for publishing the results as a national work under the direction of Congress, and without copy-right; and they have with one accord directed their chairman to move the necessary appropriation, to wit: \$30,000, being the amount usually appropriated for topographical surveys beyond the Mississippi.



## APPENDIX.

## A.

*Extract from a letter from the Hon. Edward Everett.*

"CAMBRIDGE, MASS., March 20, 1846.

DEAR SIR: A short time since, I sent two copies of the Congressional documents containing Captain Frémont's two reports to London; one to Dr. Holland, (who spoke of you with great kindness on his return to Boston,) and one to Sir R. J. Murchison, late president both of the Geological and Geographical societies, and one of the most eminent British geologists. In a letter received from the last named gentleman, by the steamer of the 4th March, he speaks in the following manner of Captain Frémont's report:— 'The work of Captain Frémont so deeply interested me, (it is really the most romantic, as well as instructive survey,) that I wrote out a little analysis of it for the president of our geological society, Mr. Horner,\* and if he has not space enough to do it justice in his anniversary discourse, I will take care that the excellent services of your countryman are duly noticed in the speech of Lord Colchester, my successor as president of the Royal Geographical Society.' Knowing your connexion with Captain Frémont, I have thought it might be some satisfaction to you to learn that his labors were appreciated by good judges abroad. I should long since have made him my personal acknowledgements for the gratification and instruction which I have derived from his reports, had I had the honor of his acquaintance. I should have sent more copies to England could I have procured them."

## B.

*Extract from a letter from Dr. Leiber, of Columbia College, South Carolina.*

"You recollect that last year I sent Colonel Frémont's report, &c., to Europe. My son, who is now studying mining in Europe, to prepare himself for your west, and to aid, one of these days, in the development of the mineral wealth of our country, lately wrote me that the papers I sent had been studied with the deepest interest by the mineralogists and geologists in Berlin, to whom Baron Humboldt had communicated them after a careful perusal by himself."

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\*Mr. Lyell's father-in-law.

## C.

*Extract from a letter from the United States consul, Edward Warren, Trieste.*

"I travelled, not as I first intended, over Hamburg and Berlin to this city, but took a passage to Leghorn, from which place I proceeded to Trieste. I availed myself of a favorable opportunity to forward the books which you entrusted to my care to Baron Von Humboldt. During the month of July I obtained a short leave of absence from my post, and proceeded to the north of Germany. Whilst at Berlin I had an interview with Baron Von Humboldt. He bade me thank you for the present with which you had favored him. He had already in his possession "Frémont's report," but not Nicollet's work. He put some questions to me in relation to yourself, your political career, your age, and so forth, to which I gave full replies. He then inquired in relation to Colonel Frémont, whose work he said had been read by him with great interest, as the work of "a man of talent, courage, industry, and enterprise." These were the words literally used by Mr. Von Humboldt.

"Extracts from the reports which have made their appearance in many of the German papers and the scientific world, (through the republication of the work by Wiley & Putnam, in London,) has become generally acquainted with it; and I can say truly, from the conversation which I have had upon the subject with many men entitled to a judgment, it is appreciated as a very able work."

## D.

*Extract from a letter from Dr. John Torrey, of Princeton, N. J.*

"After incessant working on the Californian plants, from the time they were received till this moment, I have secured all that were not decomposed, and have the entire collection in clean, dry paper. The loss of one or two boxes, and the partial injury of some others, we can well bear, when the rest are so valuable. Of those that were spoiled, I trust there were duplicates of the greater part in the rest of the herbarium. No doubt there are many new species among your discoveries. The pines are well represented, and most of them can be drawn so as to show all the essential parts. As soon as I get Captain Wilkes's plants off my hands I shall attack these with vigor. How much I regret not having a botanical artist at my elbow, as my friend Dr. Gray has. Now that the doctor has undertaken the great bulk of the exploring expedition botany, he will, I fear, need the whole of Mr. Sprague's (his artist's) time.

"The only way to have our work properly executed is, either to import an artist (and one could be got at a very moderate salary) or to send the specimens, from time to time, to Europe, where they might be drawn and put at once upon the stone."

"Please let me know what I am to do about drawings of your new and rare plants. They ought to be put in hand soon, as it will take a long time to get them properly done. At any rate I will send a few to France immediately, and have them drawn under the eye of Professors Jussieu and Decaisne. We can then find exactly what they will cost. Do you not think that the forest trees ought to be done in a style and size with Michaux's *Sylva*? A supplementary volume, or distinct work, rather, on the trees of California and Oregon, would be a most acceptable gift, not only to botanists, but to men of taste and lovers of nature generally.

"Was I right in supposing that *Taxodium sempervirens* to be your great cedar? The *Thuya* does not grow to the enormous size that you mention; but the *Taxodium* does. What a pity there was not time to get a figure of it ready for your report."

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E.

*Extract from the report of a committee of the House of Representatives, March 8, 1804, of which Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell was chairman, on the resolve of the House, directing them to inquire into the expediency of authorising the President of the United States to cause certain remote and unknown points of Louisiana to be explored.*

"By a series of remarkable events, the United States have lately acquired a large addition of soil and jurisdiction. This is believed, besides the tracts on the east side of the Mississippi, to include all the country which lies to the westward, between that river and the great chain of mountains that stretch from north to south, and divide the waters running into the Atlantic from those which empty into the Pacific ocean; and beyond that chain, between the territories claimed by Great Britain on one side, and by Spain on the other, quite to the South sea. It is highly desirable that this extensive region should be visited, in some parts at least, by intelligent men. Important additions might thereby be made to the science of geography. Various materials might thence be derived to augment our knowledge of natural history. The government would thence acquire correct information of the situation, extent, and worth of its own dominions; and individuals of research and curiosity would receive ample gratification, as to the works of art, and the productions of nature, which exist in those boundless tracts."